parameters, from the database, and utilizes the retrieved parameters to effect launching of the application on the corresponding component.

Interfacing with Multiple Host Platforms

The invention provides, in further aspects, a storage area network (SAN) of the type described above having a plurality of components including digital data processors, e.g., hosts, coupled to a plurality of storage device. A common, platform-independent process executes on the hosts, which can be of varied platform types, e.g., Unix™, Windows™, Solaris, and so forth. That process utilizes the command line interface of the host operating system to invoke at least one platform-dependent process on the respective host.

According to related aspects of the invention, the platform-independent and platform-dependent processes comprise portions of the aforementioned agents. Here, the platform-independent processes represent those portions of the agents common to all platforms. The platform-dependent processes representing modules, such as drivers and scanners, specific to each platform.

In another aspect, the invention provides a SAN as described above in which the platform-independent processes transfer commands, data and other information to the respective platform-dependent processes via command line parameters of the respective hosts operating system. In related aspects, the platform-dependent processes return data and other information back to the

respective platform-independent processes via the Standard Output and/or Standard Error of the respective host command line interface.

The invention provides, in still further aspects, a SAN as described above in which the platform-independent processes invoke the respective platform-dependent processes to obtain information, e.g., "scans," regarding the status of SAN components. The platform-independent processes capture that information (e.g., returned, via Standard Output/Error of the respective host command line interface) for transfer, e.g., to a manager digital data processor.

In still another aspect, the invention provides a SAN as described above in which the manager digital data processor transmits queries to the platform-independent processes, e.g., to effect their execute of scans. The platform-independent process responds to these queries by invoking their respective platform-dependent processes via the command line interface of the respective host, as described above, and returning the gathered information to the manager for further processing. The manager and the platform-independent process transmit information to one another formatted in a format such as XML and, further, utilize Object Request Broker protocol for communication, e.g., via a local area network.

The invention provides, in still further aspects, a SAN as described above in which the manager includes a query engine for forwarding queries to the platform-independent process, and further includes a registry that contains information regarding the common platform-independent process and the digital processor hosts associated therewith. The information in the register

provides identifiers, for example, IP address, for communicating with the platform-independent processes via their respective hosts.

Yet, still further aspects of the invention provide methods of operating a storage area network and components thereof paralleling the foregoing.

These and other aspects of the invention are evident in the drawings and in the description that follows.